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### CORSON'S COUGH CURE

By Suse Clements Willis

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It was not the first time that Corson had wished Grandma Bradley never had been born to leave a recipe book to her descendants. As a boy his earliest recollections were of vile tasting messes recommended in Grandma Bradley's book for various infantile ills, but even then he had never hated the time worn volume as he did now that he was asked to carry a whole quart of her invaluable cough sirup to his mother.

It was very good of Aunt Betsy, who was the custodian of the precious volume and compounder of its prescriptions, to send the gift, but a whiskey bottle done up in a newspaper does not match a brand new winter overcoat, and there was certain to be some one on the train to recognize him and pass the story on.

For a moment he contemplated sending the bottle by express, but the appearance of the train prevented that, and, assuming as much dignity as his burden would permit him, he clambered aboard.

There was no parlor car on the suburban train, and the smoker was filled with laborers returning from their day's work up the road. Corson hated the smell of a pipe, let alone a half hundred, and he beat a hasty retreat to the next car.

He started forward with a word of greeting as his glance took in Eunice Barbour; but, to his surprise, that young woman favored him with a glance so chilling that he was glad to sink into the nearest seat.

He could tell from her glance that it was the bottle which was responsible for the cut, but he could not imagine Eunice ignoring him because he carried a package done up in a newspaper. He wondered what sudden freak had induced her action.

He was still puzzling over the mat-

ter when a man across the way leaned forward.

"Let's have a swig, partner," he shouted hoarsely. "I ain't had one in an hour."

Corson tried to pretend he had not heard, but his bibulous traveling com-



"YOU QUIT YOUR MASHING OR OFF YOU GO."

panion was not to be denied. "Go ahead. Be generous," he implored. "You know how it is yourself."

His voice rang through the car, and the contrast between Corson and the other was too much for the rest of the passengers. They shouted with glee, all except Eunice, who rose with white lips and made her way to the next car. Corson stood the chaff as long as he could, but at last the man's persistence won, and, with flaming face, he followed the girl.

There was a vacant seat beside her, and Corson took it. She moved over to be as far distant as possible, but it is not easy to be exclusive when sharing a narrow seat. Neither could she evade Corson's low spoken words.

"What have I done?" he pleaded.

There was no answer from the window, and he leaned a little closer.

"Surely I should have the right to defend myself," he pleaded. "I am ignorant of my offense."

This time she noticed him. With flashing eyes she turned to face him.

"If you persist in speaking to me," she said firmly, "I shall appeal to the man in the car to rid me of your very unpleasant attentions."

In her intensity she spoke more distinctly than she knew, and a brawny hand shot across the aisle and shook Corson's shoulder. "See here, young fellow," warned a hoarse voice. "You quit mashin' or off you go, and I won't be particular as to whether we are at a station when you get off, either."

Corson looked helplessly at the girl, but her face was adamant except when she thanked her companion with a smile. It is evident that there was no appeal to her, and Corson wisely concluded to let the argument wait until a better time.

It was hard, though, to sit quietly beside the girl he had proposed to five days before and be denied even the right to make an appeal. He could imagine nothing except his appearance with the bundle, but surely Grandma Bradley's cough medicine was innocent enough in appearance if not in taste.

He glanced across the aisle. The giant appeared to be sleeping, but as Corson turned toward Eunice the man roused to sudden watchfulness, and Corson skillfully changed his notion to suggest that he was merely trying to look out of the window. The man was suspicious still, but not belligerent, and for the rest of the trip Corson kept his eyes fixed on the bell rope and betrayed no interest in his companion.

He was hoping there would be an opportunity at the station after the giant had gone his way, but the giant showed a very evident intention of squirting Miss Barbour to the car, and they moved down the station platform to single file, Eunice first, Corson following and the giant bringing up the rear, ready

to pounce upon Corson at the slightest chance.

Corson boarded the same car as did the girl, and the giant swung himself on to the back platform. It was evident that he was thorough in whatever he undertook, and Corson was not anxious to give him an excuse. Corson was not a coward, but he knew how little chance he would have against a man who quite evidently was used to rough and tumbles, so he sat on the edge of the seat and stared at the ceiling, while his busy brain worked at several problems, all looking toward an immediate understanding with Eunice. They had had a quarrel once before, and he had been made miserable for days. He was resolved to end this as quickly as possible and to that end followed her off the car when her street was reached.

If he had hoped to escape his escort he was mistaken, for the giant got off, too, and in the same order as at the station they proceeded down the street. Half a block along the Barbours' big Newfoundland came rushing up the street to welcome his mistress and, perceiving a friend in Corson, threw his huge bulk against that young man.

There was an exclamation as the brute dislodged the bottle in Corson's arms, and the dog went flying up the street alarmed at the noise.

At the sound Eunice turned, her face flaming with anger, in belief that Corson had struck the dog, but the bottle at his feet told its own story, and she glanced curiously at the dark, viscous fluid slowly creeping across the sidewalk. There was a familiar odor in her nostrils, and the expression in her face turned from anger to mirth as she came toward him.

"Why, Jimmie Corson," she cried, "was that really some of your grandmother's cough sirup?"

"It was," he confirmed. "I was out to visit Aunt Betsy, and she made me bring in the winter supply."

"I had forgotten she lived out of town," she laughed, "and I thought it was whiskey. Why didn't you tell me?"

"A lot of chances you gave me," he declared in an injured tone. "How could I tell you that I was more sinned against than sinning when you almost raised a riot when I tried to ask what the matter was?"

"Will you forgive me?" she asked softly, coming closer.

"On one condition," he bargained—"that you say 'Yes' to the question I asked you Wednesday."

"You said then you would give me a week," she pleaded.

"Circumstances alter cases," he decreed. "Is it 'Yes'?"

It must have been, for Corson said "Darling!" so impulsively that it reached the ears of the giant, who had drawn apart in the faint hope that there might yet be an excuse for breaking the little dude in pieces, and as he wandered back to the car his sentiments were anything but the "bless you, my children," appropriate to the circumstances.

#### Good Story, Bad Copy.

The impression that only about 10 per cent of the manuscripts submitted to publishers ever see the light of print is, according to observations made by a former newspaper man and now manager for a big publishing house, erroneous. "There is a demand for good stories among publishers in New York that is hardly met by the product," says the manager. "Any manuscript, decently written and with any merit whatever, is bound to receive careful consideration. More than that, I have in mind a case in which the first consideration was not met, and yet the story was accepted and published. A California woman sent to a large house a 20,000 word story written on what appeared to be discarded curl papers. Yet so conscientious was the 'reader' that he waded through a great part of it under protest, and, behold, he found a gem! A poorly written story, no matter how good the plot or interesting the theme, has little show, but writers should not be discouraged by reports of harsh or indifferent treatment at the hands of publishers."—Pittsburg Dispatch.

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